

WHEN MEN SEE RED ...

Have you ever noticed that with women nothing is ever black or white? Nothing is grey, either. Instead, it's charcoal, ivory or cream. When it comes to colours, women have an entirely different vocabulary.

To me, something is either green or blue. If I can't make up my mind, I'll call it greenish blue. But women have words for all these intricate shades, like periwinkle, jade and evergreen. They never call something red. To them it's crimson, scarlet or magenta. Brown becomes taupe, beige, chestnut or mahogany. Even your basic blue they'll call royal, navy or Wedgwood blue.

To women, even things become colours ...like champagne, gold, peach, emerald, lemon, raspberry and rust. Since when is rust a colour? And what's with all those fruits? Orange I accept, but not tangerine, cherry or grape. Women even name their daughters after colours – Ruby, Olive, Rose, Amber, Ginger, Hazel and Violet. There are no men named Brown or Yellow.

And then there's female labels such as mauve, lavender and my favourite, turquoise. I have no idea what basic colours these resemble. I don't want to know. In general, men couldn't care less that when it comes to identifying various hues, women have a vocabulary twenty times larger than ours. That doesn't make us feel inadequate in the least; in fact, we're proud that we only deal with *real* colours like purple and black. Most men wouldn't be caught dead calling something fuchsia or indigo. Words like that are almost a threat to our manhood. Besides, our limited vocabulary in that area is amply

compensated elsewhere. For example, we have as many words for breasts as women have for colours.

But why do women feel the need to invent shades like burgundy and maroon? What drives them on to create such intricate tints as ecru and terra cotta? I think it comes from this whole redecorating and nesting thing they've got going on. After all, no one can decorate like a woman.

When I met my wife, I lived alone and had a simple, sparsely adorned apartment. Once she moved in, everything was rearranged. Furniture had to be moved, replaced or polished. Knick-knacks and paintings were bought and displayed, and all my original possessions were reorganized or hidden. Throw a baby into the picture and you have major reconstruction. All this ties in with women's outlook on colours; they're obsessed with how things "look". Ask a woman to paint and she'll spend weeks choosing a particular shade of white. I didn't know there *were* shades of white.

This is why women take so long when they go shopping. They're looking for the perfect dress or the ideal purse to match something else they took five hours to buy. And it's got to be exactly the right shade, the right size and the right style. Men don't understand any of this, and we never will. We just don't think the same way. When it comes to shopping, we do *not* browse. We buy things. The faster, the better. If I can pick up a toaster, a power bar, two cans of oil and a DVD, and get in and out of the store in twelve minutes, I consider that an achievement.

The bottom line is that we're chemically different from women. We don't have the female nesting urges so we're not concerned whether or not the toaster matches the

microwave. As long as it makes toast, we couldn't care less if it's teal with coral and cerise stripes. Or jade with chartreuse and auburn polka dots.

Sure, there are times when I want to do some redecorating. After all, I could use a new coffee-table or a nicer wall-unit. I'll even grudgingly look through a catalogue. But don't ask me to pick out the colour.